

CYGNET AWARD APPLICATION: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

La Trobe University proudly acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands where its campuses are located. We recognise that Indigenous Australians have an ongoing connection to the land and the University values their unique contribution to both the University and the wider Australian society.

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ABOUT LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

La Trobe’s vision and global position today is deeply connected to the strength of our past.

Established in 1967 with the mission of serving Victoria’s growing community in Melbourne’s North, and expanding more deeply into the regions over the ensuing years, La Trobe is Victoria’s only genuinely state-wide university (Figure 1). Our campus network plays a vital role in the future of local communities, increasing access to higher education and research and facilitating strong partnerships with schools, TAFE, local government and industry.

Throughout its history, our university has always had a strong sense of social justice and public engagement, undertaking teaching and research highly relevant to our community and the Asia-pacific region.



Figure 1: The Location of La Trobe University Campuses

The global impact of our teaching, research and resource use has been internationally recognised. We ranked in the top 20 globally for our contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and top 5 for gender equity in the Times High Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2021.

Domestically, we enrol more Australian students from equity groups than the national average, alongside international students from 120 countries around the world. A quarter of our students have a regional, rural or remote background and over a third of our students are the first in their family to study at university.

This makes us one of the most accessible and diverse universities in Australia. At the same time, we are ranked in the top 250 of universities globally by the 2024 QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) world university rankings. No other Australian university combines equity and social impact with globally recognised excellence as well as La Trobe.

We have focused our research investment on our strengths in sustainable food and agriculture; resilient environments and communities; social change and equity; healthy people, family and communities; and understanding and preventing disease. We use our campuses, especially at Bundoora, to attract industry partners to work with us, especially in food and agriculture, digital technologies and health, sport, and wellbeing.

Campus Location	Students of regional origin*	Low SES*	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander*	First in Family	Mature Age[^]	Disability	International
Regional	83.04%	33.29%	1.86%	35.93%	47.25%	14.38%	5.26%
Metro	11.51%	16.26%	0.65%	34.84%	47.76%	11.77%	17.94%
Total	26.35%	19.80%	0.90%	35.04%	47.67%	12.25%	15.60%

Table 1: Equivalent Full-Time Student Load Student load (EFTSL) by location and equity/demographic group, 2022

SIZE, STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

La Trobe is one of the largest providers of regional higher education in Victoria. It operates a network of connected campuses. Depending on the measure (proportion of revenue, staff, students) 20-30% of the University is 'regional'. In 2022, La Trobe employed a headcount of 5,249 staff (57% academic and 43% professional), with a headcount of 27,599 domestic and 7,140 international students enrolled. The diversity of our student body, which is a defining characteristic of La Trobe, arises from our campus footprint. With higher educational participation much lower in regional Victoria than in metropolitan areas, were it not for our regional campuses, many of our students may never have the opportunity to go to university.

La Trobe University was established under the Victorian La Trobe University Act 1964 and the Vice-Chancellor is appointed by Council to be the chief executive officer of the University.

La Trobe's governance structure is made up of three bodies:

- Council – the University's governing authority, Chaired by the Chancellor
- Senior Executive Group – the principal management committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor
- Academic Board – the advisory committee to the Vice-Chancellor and Council on academic excellence

La Trobe University is made up of several supporting portfolios and offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses throughout ten schools across differing discipline areas including:

- La Trobe Business School
- La Trobe Law School
- La Trobe Rural Health School
- School of Agriculture, Biomedicine and Environment
- School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport
- School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences
- School of Education
- School of Humanities and Social Sciences
- School of Nursing and Midwifery
- School of Psychology and Public Health

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In 2022, the University’s research revenue was approximately \$101 million. La Trobe has demonstrated its excellence on the global stage, achieving a milestone result in the QS World University Rankings, rising 74 places to 242 in the world – our best performance ever. La Trobe also rose three places to 298 in Shanghai Ranking’s Academic Ranking of World Universities 2022, also our best performance ever. La Trobe’s themed approach to research aligned to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals has seen our research impact ranked in the top 20 worldwide for global impact, according to the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022.

Industry engagement has seen transformational change across 2022 with the integration of three new service areas (enterprise development, business development education and operations) to support the University’s partnership with the industry ecosystem. This has provided industry with an opportunity to access research, innovation and students to support their organisational growth. The positive impact of this integrated approach has strengthened our university partnerships with local start-ups as well as large, university-wide partnerships.

La Trobe received national recognition for teaching excellence, with five Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning at the Australian Awards for University Teaching in 2022. This was the highest number of citations awarded to a Victorian university.

The domestic student body is 69% female. In STEM this decreases to 47% (Table 2).

As of 2022, the University employs nearly twice as many women (66%) compared to men (34%). The percentage of women is higher among professional staff (68%) compared to academic staff (64%) (Table 3).

Women constitute 44% of academic staff in STEM and 54% of professional staff in STEM.

Course Ownership School	Female	Male	Self-Described	Total	Female	Male	Self-Described
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STEM	School of Agriculture, Biomedicine & Environment	1899	1021	9	2929	64.83%	34.86%	0.31%
	School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences	423	1552	7	1982	21.34%	78.30%	0.35%
Non-STEM	Graduate Research School	748	407	7	1162	64.37%	35.03%	0.60%
	La Trobe Business School	1289	1563	>6	2854	45.16%	54.77%	0.07%
	La Trobe Law School	1245	533	>6	1779	69.98%	29.96%	0.06%
	La Trobe Rural Health School	2365	643	>6	3009	78.60%	21.37%	0.03%
	Office of the Provost	11	>6	>6	13	84.62%	15.38%	0.00%
	School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport	3015	1212	>6	4229	71.29%	28.66%	0.05%
	School of Education	2288	886	8	3182	71.90%	27.84%	0.25%
	School of Humanities and Social Sciences	1188	837	14	2039	58.26%	41.05%	0.69%
	School of Nursing & Midwifery	2075	189	>6	2264	91.65%	8.35%	0.00%
	School of Psychology & Public Health	1650	502	>6	2157	76.50%	23.27%	0.23%
STEM TOTAL		2322	2573	16	4911	47.28%	52.39%	0.33%
Non-STEM TOTAL		15874	6774	40	22688	69.97%	29.86%	0.18%
Grand Total		18196	9347	56	27599	65.93%	33.87%	0.20%

Table 2: Headcount of domestic students by School 2022 (undergraduate and postgraduate)

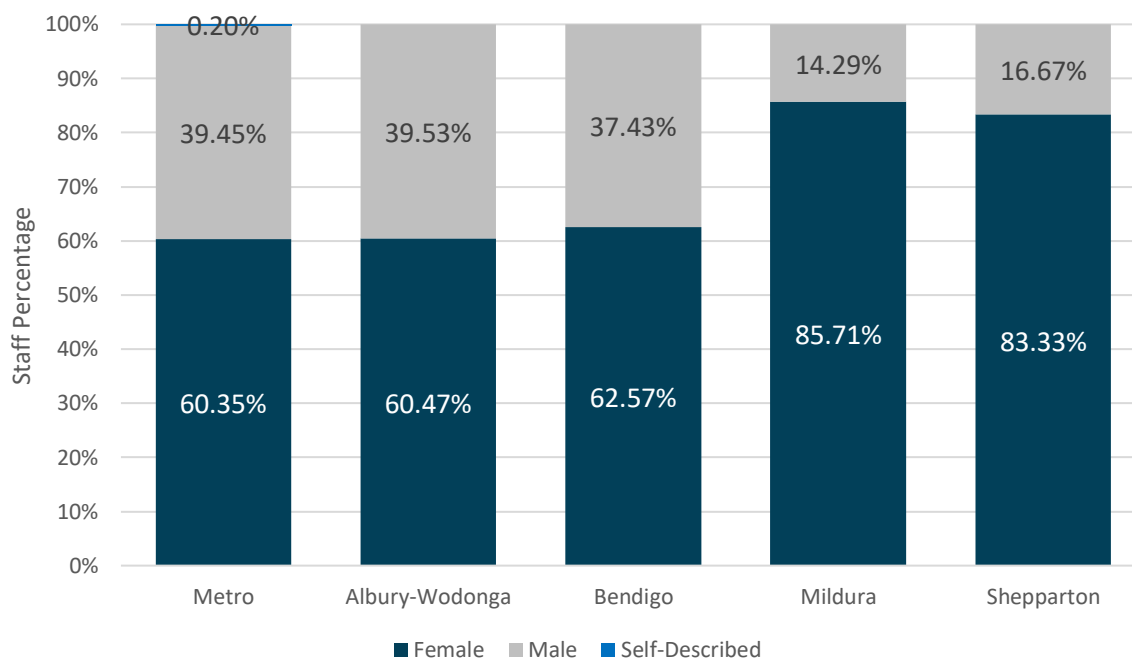


Figure 1: Percentage of La Trobe academic staff by campus, 2022 (excluding casuals)

AREA / SCHOOL	Academic							Professional							All Staff						
	Female	Male	Self-Described	Total	F %	M %	SD %	Female	Male	Self-Described	Total	F %	M %	SD %	Female	Male	Self-Described	Total	F %	M %	SD %
STEMM School of Cancer Medicine	-	>6	-	>6	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-	>6	-	>6	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
STEM School Ag Biomed & Enviro	192	166	-	358	53.6%	46.4%	0.0%	50	35	-	85	58.8%	41.2%	0.0%	242	201	-	443	54.6%	45.4%	0.0%
School Comp Eng & Math Sci	51	145	-	196	26.0%	74.0%	0.0%	10	16	-	26	38.5%	61.5%	0.0%	61	161	-	222	27.5%	72.5%	0.0%
Dep Applied System Bio	>6	9	-	13	30.8%	69.2%	0.0%	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	>6	9	-	13	30.8%	69.2%	0.0%
La Trobe Business School	96	98	-	194	49.5%	50.5%	0.0%	17	10	-	27	63.0%	37.0%	0.0%	113	108	-	221	51.1%	48.9%	0.0%
La Trobe Law School	69	29	>6	99	69.7%	29.3%	1.0%	>6	-	-	>6	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	72	29	>6	102	70.6%	28.4%	1.0%
La Trobe Rural Health School	233	121	-	354	65.8%	34.2%	0.0%	34	9	-	43	79.1%	20.9%	0.0%	267	130	-	397	67.3%	32.7%	0.0%
School Allied Health, Human Serv & Sport	400	170	>6	572	69.9%	29.7%	0.3%	69	27	-	96	71.9%	28.1%	0.0%	469	197	>6	668	70.2%	29.5%	0.3%
Non-STEM School of Education	125	41	>6	167	74.9%	24.6%	0.6%	17	>6	-	20	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	142	44	>6	187	75.9%	23.5%	0.5%
School of Humanities & Social Sciences	183	117	>6	303	60.4%	38.6%	1.0%	15	>6	-	18	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	198	120	>6	321	61.7%	37.4%	0.9%
School of Nursing & Midwifery	217	35	-	252	86.1%	13.9%	0.0%	25	>6	-	28	89.3%	10.7%	0.0%	242	38	-	280	86.4%	13.6%	0.0%
School of Psychology & Public Health	279	91	>6	371	75.2%	24.5%	0.3%	129	28	>6	160	80.6%	17.5%	1.9%	408	119	>6	531	76.8%	22.4%	0.8%
Office of Provost	22	12	-	34	64.7%	35.3%	0.0%	177	84	-	261	67.8%	32.2%	0.0%	199	96	-	295	67.5%	32.5%	0.0%
Professional & Administrative Portfolios	56	28	-	84	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	977	503	>6	1482	65.9%	33.9%	0.1%	1033	531	>6	1566	66.0%	33.9%	0.1%
STEMM Total	0	>6	-	>6	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-	>6	-	>6	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
STEM Total	247	320	-	567	43.6%	56.4%	0.0%	60	51	-	111	54.1%	45.9%	0.0%	307	371	-	678	45.3%	54.7%	0.0%
Non-STEM Total	1680	742	8	2430	69.1%	30.5%	0.3%	1463	670	>6	2138	68.4%	31.3%	0.2%	3143	1412	13	4568	68.8%	30.9%	0.3%
La Trobe Total	1927	1065	8	3000	64.2%	35.5%	0.3%	1523	721	>6	2249	67.7%	32.1%	0.2%	3450	1786	13	5249	65.7%	34.0%	0.2%

Table 3: Gender composition of academic and professional staff at La Trobe University by School, 2022 (headcount, all levels of employment and all contract types)

OUR SAGE JOURNEY

La Trobe's participation in the SAGE Pilot has informed preliminary findings which have initiated programs to address gender inequity.

The application for bronze accreditation was a significant undertaking over three years. This involved many people across the University including over 50 members of our self-assessment team and Project Managers. The SAGE steering committee, comprised of senior leaders, ensured oversight of all gender equality activities and launched several initiatives. This included:

- the Women's Academic Promotions support program
 - An annual program that seeks to address the gender imbalance in senior academic positions by encouraging and guiding academic women and gender-diverse people to apply for promotion.
- the Tracey Banivanua Mar Fellowships
 - Annual fellowships that support future research leaders who have major care giving responsibilities.
- the Carers Travel Support fund
 - Financial support for researchers who are primary carers with the cost of childcare or other care costs while presenting at a domestic or international conference or undertaking research in Australia or abroad.

In addition, since 2015, La Trobe has appointed several women to senior roles including the DVC (Students), DVC (Research and Industry Engagement), DVC (Future Growth), DVC (Education) and PVC (Regional). In 2023, women now make up two-thirds of the Senior Executive Group.

Post bronze accreditation in 2019, a SAGE Implementation Group was established and comprised of key senior leaders. This group, listed below, was responsible for the implementation of the University's four-year SAGE Athena SWAN Action Plan.

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Industry Engagement (DVCRIE) (Project Sponsor and Chair)
- Chief Financial and Operations Officer
- Provost College of Science, Health and Engineering
- Provost College of Arts, Social Science and Commerce
- Executive Director Research Office

- Executive Director Human Resources
- Director, Planning and Institutional Performance

With the new Gender Equality Act 2020, the SAGE Implementation Group was disbanded and a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee was established along with four working groups.

The EDI Committee is made up of:

- Vice-Chancellor
- Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Industry Engagement
- Provost
- Chief Operations Officer
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor Students
- Executive Director Human Resources
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor Global and Regional
- Academic board representative
- EDI Team Representative
- 3 student representatives
- 4 working group chairs

The four working groups made up of staff from across the University are:

- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
- Gender Equity
- LGBTQIA+ Inclusion
- Disability and Neurodiversity Inclusion

The EDI committee are accountable for the delivery of the SAGE Athena Swan Silver Action Plan 2022 - 2025, and the Gender Equity Action Plan (GEAP) 2021 - 2025. The new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team, established in October 2022 project manage the SAGE and GEAP plans and coordinate gender equity reporting. The gender equity working group are a consultation and advisory point on gender equity matters and provide guidance on the implementation and progress of the SAGE and GEAP plans.

Despite these advances, there is still much to do to create a University community that is equitable, diverse, inclusive, safe, accessible and respectful.

In alignment with SAGE guidelines, La Trobe audited its Bronze Action Plan to determine the Five Key Barriers to attraction, retention, or progression of underrepresented groups of staff. Removal, or reduction, of these Key Barriers, became La Trobe's Key Priority Areas for action. It was determined that the removal of these Key Barriers should have the greatest positive effect on attraction, retention or progression of underrepresented groups of staff and thus on advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the institution. For this reason, not all actions in the 2019-2023 SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan were included in these Key Priority Areas. In November 2021, the 2019-2023 SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan was audited, and remaining actions were migrated to either the 2021-2025 Gender Equity Action Plan or the 2022-2027 SAGE Athena Swan Silver Action Plan. Through this audit, three institution-wide Key Priority Areas and two sub-groups specific Key Priority Areas were identified as part of the 2022-2027 SAGE Athena Swan Silver Action Plan:

Institution-wide barriers to Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion:

- Key Priority Area 1: Academic Promotion
- Key Priority Area 2: Recruitment
- Key Priority Area 3: Support for career interruptions and caring responsibilities

Sub-group specific barriers to Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:

- Key Priority Area 4: Recruiting and retaining women staff in STEM
- Key Priority Area 5: Providing a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment: institutional culture and support for LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse staff

1. COVID-19 & OUR TRANSFORMATION

The University Transformation Program (UTP) was established in June 2020 to provide a strategic basis for the necessary cost reduction activities that were anticipated to be required due to the reduction in revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the transformation program implemented following programs: the Jobs Protection framework; the Voluntary Redundancy Program; Non-Salary Savings and Capital Program Reductions.

In 2021, the Transformation Program focused on delivering a revised University structure which allowed the University to continue cost reduction. In 2022 this revised structure allowed us to reduce operating salaries by \$72.0 million or 18 per cent from the 2019 pre-COVID baseline. Women were not disproportionately affected by the transformation, as the proportion of men and women who exited at this time matched the proportion of men and women prior to the transformation.

The HR transformation commenced in August 2022. The newly structured HR Division enabled a clearer leadership structure, removed duplication of effort across teams, provided clearer accountabilities and brought in a customer-focused model. In addition, the change reinstated equity, diversity and inclusion activities within HR.

Whilst the transformation was instrumental in shifting the University's strategic focus to prepare itself for a post-COVID future, this meant that some programs of work were halted due to a focus on the Covid-19 response, organisational restructures and rescoped priorities. Between 2020 and 2022, many Equity, Diversity and Inclusion focussed programs were unable to be implemented or adequately supported due to the COVID-19 response, a lack of resourcing and a loss of institutional knowledge due to staff departures.